

Message Text

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ACTION CU-03

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 USIA-06 /017 W

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R 160933Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1054

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FOR EA/ROC AND CU/EA

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, SCUL, CVIS, US, CH, TW

SUBJECT: VISIT OF ROC CULTURAL GROUPS TO THE U.S.

REF: STATE 226810

1. EMBASSY WILL ATTEMPT IN THE FUTURE TO PROVIDE INFORMATION ON CULTURAL GROUPS AS REQUESTED REFTEL AND IS NOW PREPARING A QUESTIONNAIRE WHICH ALL NEW GROUPS WILL BE ASKED TO COMPLETE. WE ALSO PLAN TO DELIVER COPIES OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE TO APPROPRIATE OFFICIALS IN MOFA AND MOE AND WILL EMPHASIZE TO THEM THE NECESSITY OF EARLY SUBMISSION OF COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE TO THE CONSULAR SECTION BY EACH CULTURAL/SPORTS GROUP PLANNING TO TRAVEL TO THE U.S.

2. HOWEVER, BASED ON PAST EXPERIENCE, OBTAINING THE INFORMATION DEPARTMENT HAS REQUESTED WILL TAKE CONSIDERABLE TIME. IN MANY CASES THE GROUP ITSELF DOES NOT KNOW MUCH BEYOND ITS ITINERARY, RELYING ON SPONSOR IN THE U.S. TO MAKE APPROPRIATE HOTEL AND TRANSPORTATION ARRANGEMENTS. ALSO, MANY GROUPS PERFORM IN ONLY A FEW CITIES LISTED ON THEIR ITINERARIES; VISITS TO REMAINING CITIES ARE FOR SIGHTSEEING, FOR WHICH THERE IS NO SPONSORING ORGANIZATION.

3. ON APPROPRIATE OCCASIONS IN THE PAST, WE HAVE EMPHASIZED TO THE GROG, AS WELL AS TO GROUPS THEMSELVES, THE NECESSITY OF SUBMITTING APPLICATIONS FOR VISAS WELL IN ADVANCE OF PLANNED

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DEPARTURE. WE WILL ALSO IMPRESS UPON CULTURAL GROUPS AT THE

TIME OF THEIR INITIAL APPLICATION FOR A VISA THE NECESSITY OF SUPPLYING THE REQUESTED INFORMATION AS QUICKLY AND IN AS DETAILED A FASHION AS POSSIBLE. HOWEVER, EVEN IF APPLICATIONS ARE SUBMITTED IN A TIMELY FASHION, REQUIREMENTS FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION SOUGHT BY THE DEPARTMENT ARE BOUND TO CAUSE DELAYS AND IN SOME CASES COULD REQUIRE GROUPS TO ALTER OR CANCEL THEIR TRIPS. THIS COULD, OF COURSE, RESULT IN UNFORTUNATE PUBLICITY WHICH WE ASSUME DEPARTMENT WOULD WISH TO AVOID.

4. TO MEET WITH THIS PROBLEM, DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO CONSIDER ADVISABILITY OF EMBASSY TAIPEI'S UNDERTAKING A TWO-STEP PROCESS IN INFORMING THE DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL GROUPS' PLANS, I.E., AN INITIAL MESSAGE PROVIDING NAME OF GROUP, SPONSOR (OR SPONSORS) IN U.S., AND ITINERARY, FOLLOWED BY A MORE DETAILED MESSAGE PROVIDING ADDITIONAL DATA BASED ON INFORMATION SUPPLIED ON QUESTIONNAIRE. WHEN THE INITIAL MESSAGE LISTS A SINGLE U.S. SPONSOR FOR THE ENTIRE ITINERARY, THE DEPARTMENT MAY ALSO WISH TO CONSIDER THE ADVISABILITY OF SEEKING ADDITIONAL INFORMATION DIRECTLY FROM THAT SPONSOR.

5. AMEMBASSY TAIPEI HAD ASSUMED THAT THE PURPOSE OF THE EXISTING PRE-CLEARANCE PROCEDURE WAS TO AVOID CONCURRENT VISITS OF ROC AND PRC GROUPS TO THE SAME CITY. WE ARE THEREFORE PUZZLED BY INFORMATION CONTAINED PARA 2 REFTEL AND WOULD APPRECIATE CLARIFICATION FROM THE DEPARTMENT. HAVE GROUPS BEEN FAILING TO SUPPLY COMPLETE ITINERARIES OR TO FOLLOW THOSE ITINERARIES OR HAVE SOME GROUPS ARRIVED IN U.S. WITHOUT EMBASSY'S SUBMISSION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF REQUEST FOR CLEARANCE? IF THE PROBLEM IS ONE OF ITINERARIES, WE CAN PLACE MORE EMPHASIS WHEN MEETING WITH GROUP REPRESENTATIVE ON THE NECESSITY OF FOLLOWING THE ITINERARY AS SUBMITTED. IN CASES WHERE GROUPS MAY NOT HAVE BEEN PRE-CLEARED, HOWEVER, THE PROBLEM COULD BE MORE COMPLEX.

6. IN THAT REGARD, WE BELIEVE IT WOULD BE USEFUL IF THE DEPARTMENT COULD PROVIDE MORE DETAILED GUIDELINES ON WHAT TYPES OF GROUPS REQUIRE DEPARTMENT APPROVAL BEFORE VISAS ARE ISSUED. WE HAVE BEEN ROUTINELY REQUIRING DEPARTMENT CLEARANCE ON ROC CULTURAL AND SPORTS GROUPS WHICH ARE CLEARLY TRAVELING TO U.S. TO PROMOTE ROC'S IMAGE. IN OTHER CASES, WE HAVE ATTEMPTED TO DETERMINE WHETHER GROUP'S PRESENCE IN U.S. IS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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LIKELY TO GENERATE PUBLICITY, A QUESTION THAT IS NOT ALWAYS POSSIBLE TO ASSESS ACCURATELY FROM HERE.

7. RECENT EXAMPLES OF CASES WHERE WE HAVE BEEN UNCERTAIN WHETHER A PRE-CLEARANCE BY DEPARTMENT IS REQUIRED INCLUDE THE ABACUS TEAM SPONSORED BY THE ROC GENERAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (TAIPEI 5076), THE ROC BUDDHIST ASSOCIATION (TAIPEI 4947), AND AN ACROBATIC TEAM GOING TO HAWAII TO PERFORM COMMERCIALLY IN

A RESTAURANT (WE DID NOT PRE-CLEAR).

8. ACTION REQUESTED: WOULD APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT'S COMMENTS
ON THE ABOVE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
UNGER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CULTURAL PRESENTATIONS, VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 16 SEP 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: greeneet
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976TAIPEI06299
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760350-0492
From: TAIPEI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760951/aaaabsap.tel
Line Count: 120
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION CU
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 STATE 226810
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: greeneet
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <24 MAY 2004 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <22 SEP 2004 by greeneet>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: VISIT OF ROC CULTURAL GROUPS TO THE U.S.
TAGS: PFOR, SCUL, CVIS, US, CH, TW
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006